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## **PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Office of Program Resources Management**

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### **INVESTING IN PEOPLE**

**(Education)**

#### **US, Philippine oil refiner to build classrooms in troubled south**

**(Source: The Earth Times – London, UK – 4/15/08)**

Manila - The US government and the largest oil refiner in the Philippines said Monday they will donate 2.5 million dollars to build additional classrooms in public elementary schools in the troubled southern region of Mindanao. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Petron Foundation will each provided 1.25 million dollars to "help alleviate classroom shortages and improve access to basic education in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao."

US Ambassador to Manila Kristie Kenney and Petron chairman and chief executive officer Nicasio Alcantara signed an agreement for the joint project on Monday.

The project "will equip new and refurbished classrooms with water and electricity, an average of 25 school desks each, plus teachers' tables and chairs, blackboards, cabinets, fans, clocks and toilets," a US embassy statement said. The statement added that the USAID earlier identified areas for classroom construction and rehabilitation in 35 municipalities and four cities in Mindanao, home to the Philippines' Muslim minority and some of the poorest communities in the country.

A decades-old Muslim insurgency has left many areas in Mindanao underdeveloped despite the region's rich mineral reserves. The area has also become a hideout and training ground for local and foreign terrorist groups, officials said.